DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 658 CE 068 611

TITLE	Workforce Skills: Newsletter of the Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program, 1994.
INSTITUTION	Colorado State Community Coll. and Occupational Education System, Denver.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC. National Workplace Literacy Program.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	23p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Workforce Skills; 1994
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Basic Skills; *Classroom Techniques; *Community Colleges; Coordination; Delivery Systems; Educational Practices; Labor Force Development; *Literacy Education; *Partnerships in Education; Problem Solving; Skill Development; *Student Evaluation; Teaching Methods; Teamwork; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Colorado; *Workplace Literacy

ABSTRACT

This document consists of the four issues of the newsletter "Workforce Skills" published during 1994. This newsletter contains a variety of articles about Colorado's Community College and Occupational Education System (CCOES) and about work force skills training developed and delivered by community colleges. Each newsletter includes some or all of the following: articles about developing, implementing, and/or evaluating work force skills training programs; a review of a resource for or about workplace literacy/workplace education; profiles of CCOES board members; and announcements of upcoming events related to workplace education. Among the topics covered are the following: the workplace learning grant awarded to CCOES; using assessment results for individual goal setting; sharing curriculum across sites; teaching problem solving; how the CCOES workplace education program has influence on participants' lives, skills for self-directed teams; communication skills for teams; using interviews, observations, and surveys to measure impact; using interactive "cool-down" techniques to promote retention of material, foster interaction in the workplace, and provide instructors with feedback about what students are learning; issues that company advisory boards/teams face as workplace partners; and basic skills competencies. (MN)

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ED 380 658

Workforce Skills
Newsletter of the Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program

1994

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WORKFORCE SKILLS

Newsletter of
THE SKILLS FOR A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE PROGRAM

COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO SERVE 950 IN WORKPLACE LEARNING GRANT

The Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System has been awarded $768,289 from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to continue collaborative efforts with Colorado businesses in an effort to increase productivity and competitiveness through workplace learning programs.

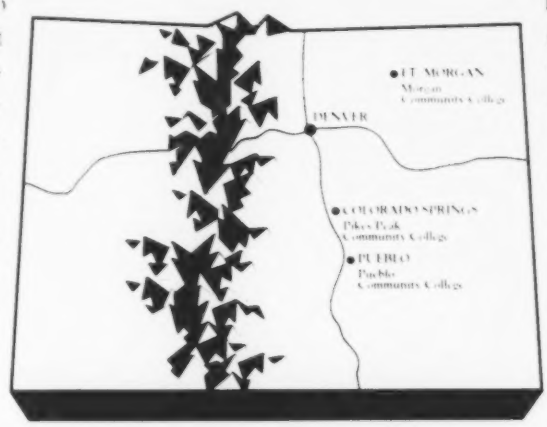
The grant, part of DOE's National Workplace Literacy Program, will fund projects at Morgan Community College (MCC), Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC), and Pueblo Community College (PCC). In 1991, DOE awarded the System $620,000 to establish the statewide effort.

"The new funding will continue the efforts started with the first grant," explained Mary Gershwin, Colorado Workplace Literacy Program director. "Working in collaboration with our business partners, we've successfully helped develop and advance the skills of the state's workforce. Given the highly competitive, high performance demands of today's work environments, these projects are vital."

Patty Tank, System Special Projects Director, is serving in a co-administrative position with Gershwin.

MCC is working with Excel Meat Packing; PPCC with Current, Inc., and PCC with Parkview Episcopal Medical Center and St. Mary Corwin Regional Medical Center. Each organization will be audited to determine its employees' learning needs.

The System is the largest and fastest growing higher education system in Colorado. Encompassing 11 state system community colleges, four local district community colleges, six area vocational schools and vocational education programs in 166 school districts, the System serves over 215,000 Coloradans annually.



Community College System Partnerships

PUEBLO COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Parkview Episcopal Medical Center
St. Mary Corwin Regional Medical Center

PIKES PEAK COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Current, Inc.

MORGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Excel Meat Packing

IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE...

Workplace Learning Advisory Teams: Profiles of Success

"The Mind-Work-out" Teaching Strategies For High Impact

Resource Review: "The Applied Communication Series"

FOR INFORMATION About Receiving This Newsletter, See Opposite Side For Coupon.

WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED?

WORKFORCE SKILLS *Newsletter*

Call for Articles

Do you have an idea, strategy, or point of view about workplace learning that you want to share with others? If so, let us know. We'll consider it for publication. For more information, contact Mary Crabbe Gershwin, Editor, **WORKFORCE SKILLS**. (303) 620-4000

NEWSLETTER CHRONICLES WORKPLACE LEARNING Beginning in November, The Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program is publishing a quarterly newsletter, **WORKFORCE SKILLS**, to track developments in the field of workplace learning. This publication, written by and for practitioners and advocates of foundation skills training, is available free of charge. If you are interested in receiving the newsletter, return the coupon on the back page of this bulletin.

WORKFORCE SKILLS: ***How to Receive Your Quarterly Update on Workplace Learning***

The first full issue of **WORKFORCE SKILLS** will be published in November. To receive this free newsletter, complete this coupon and return it to: **WORKFORCE SKILLS, Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program, Community College and Occupational Education System, 1391 North Speer Boulevard, Suite 600, Denver, Colorado 80204-2554**

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WORKFORCE SKILLS

Newsletter of
THE SKILLS FOR A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE PROGRAM

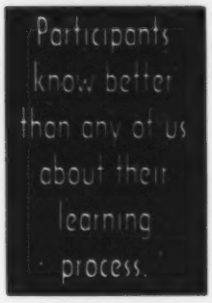
COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Individual Goal Setting

A Quick Way to Deal with Assessment Results

by Rita Moore

Research among workplace representatives from business and education continues to reveal that participants know better than any of us about their learning process.



We can pre- and post-test until students throw their pencils up in despair, but that process does not get at the heart of three things:

- transfer of learning;
- application of learning; and
- satisfaction with learning.

There may be a way to address all of these things by asking students to tell us what their learning goals are before they begin class and then ask them to assess their success later.

Here's what we came up with at the Current, Inc./ Pikes Peak Foundation Skills Project.

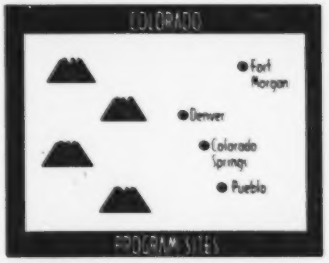
1. Introduce the class content.
2. Discuss issues like communication, productivity, motivation, attendance and the relationship of self-esteem to learning.
3. On a 5X7 inch note card, ask students to write separate learning goals associated with the class subject and any of the issues discussed.
4. Ask students to rate where they are now with each goal on a scale of one to five with five being the highest. (Later you may want to assign percentages to each goal so that this can be translated into participant data.)
5. At the end of the course, ask students to assess how much they have improved on each one of their goals and to explain how and why. This is also a good time to review Individual Instructional Plans to see if students want to make any changes or add comments to them for future reference.
6. These student improvements can easily be translated into participant data using percentages that coordinate with each rating. Teachers may want to compare how they rate the student progress on each goal and perhaps, take the average of the two ratings. Others may simply elect to deal with the data as an indicator of learner self-evaluation.

Information from participants in the form of individual goals is useful and enlightening to teachers for program modification. It is also a motivating way of drawing students into the learning process by letting them know that their learning goals are at the heart of classroom instruction.

Rita Moore leads the Current, Inc./ Pikes Peak Foundation Skills Project.

Sharing Curriculum Across Sites

by Cindy Graham
Pueblo Community College



An effective curriculum is the lifeblood of any successful education program.

In late November 1993, the "Skills for a Competitive Workforce" program in Pueblo needed a transfusion. One event after another had delayed the start of the project: a proposed merger, the accreditation process, internal reorganization, indecision about class offerings and times.... As the fall ended, Pueblo still had no classes and no participants.

Fortunately for the Pueblo program, Colorado Springs based Janelle Diller and Rita Moore suggested a treatment plan that they found worked well for their project. They had developed a "Learn To Learn" course as an excellent starting place for their program.

Initially, Janelle provided me with the "Learn To Learn" course outline and spent about 30 minutes describing some of her experiences in the classes. I also observed several classes. Her outline provided the basic content and instructional approaches.

I used Janelle and Rita's outline with a few minor adjustments, as the subject of the next partnership team meeting at one of the hospitals. The outcome of the meeting was that "Learn To Learn" was offered as a pilot class to selected members of the hospital's dietary, environmental services, and maintenance departments.

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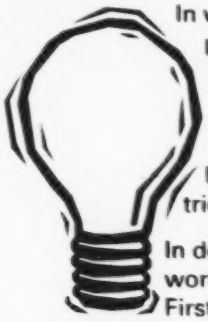
Teaching Problem Solving

by Janelle Diller
Pikes Peak Community College



In workplace education programs, problem solving classes attract participants.

After all, most individuals face problems either at work or home and wish for a bag of tricks to solve them.

In developing such a course for the workplace, two things are central. First, the learners must gain tangible strategies in brainstorming, gathering information, exploring and choosing a solution, implementing the solution, and reviewing the problem-solving process for improving it.

Second, learners often need to build their critical thinking skills in order to use the strategies effectively. Developing critical thinking is generally the more elusive of the two. To encourage growth, classes should be structured to stretch thinking in four ways: fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality.

Fluency can be loosely translated to mean quantity. After all, 50 ideas may actually produce three good ones. Conversely, five ideas often won't produce any. Fluency exercises can be as simple and fun as having learners list as many birds as they can think of or list as many things as they can think of that come in threes. Sheer numbers is the goal here.

Flexibility adds a dimension to fluency. How divergent is their thinking? For instance, in listing birds, do participants think of the ordinary—robin, cardinal, and eagle? Or do they stretch their minds enough to include yellow-bellied sapsucker, egret, or emu? Is their thinking flexible enough to come up with Big Bird, Donald Duck, or the Bird of Happiness? Good problem solving requires being able to stretch beyond traditional thinking.

Elaboration means taking an idea and building all the necessary pieces. It's not enough to have a workable idea; one also needs to be able to flesh it out in a variety of ways. One elaboration exercise is to take a partial drawing and make it into a full picture. This also calls for fluency and flexibility.

Finally, originality is vital to problem solving. G. C. Lichtenberg once said, "Everyone is a genius at least once a year; a real genius has his original ideas closer together." Too often in problem solving, original ideas don't occur often; consequently, we choose the same mediocre solutions to the same reoccurring problems. To build originality, try exercises such as writing half of eight in a creative way or describe what the world would look like if humans had wheels instead of feet.*

No matter how good the instruction in problem solving strategies may be, ultimately the skill depends on being able to see old problems in new ways. By encouraging fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality, critical thinking will be increased and the learner's bag of problem-solving tricks will be a little fatter.

* Is Your Bed Still There When You Close The Door? by Jane M. Healy

Janelle Diller is the lead instructor at the Pikes Peak Community College/ Current Project.

Coming in October

The Institute for Workplace Education

Day One: How to Build Organizational Support for Workplace Education

Day Two: Designing Curriculum for Workplace Education

Watch for more information, or call 303-620-4029.

Sharing Curriculum...Continued from page 1

The name of the course was changed to "Self-Awareness and Learning Power," which aptly describes both the intent and the content of the class. The course mirrors the "Learn To Learn" format. The class meets once a week for six weeks. Each week is devoted to a single topic: Learning Styles, Basic Skills Assessment, Memory, Reading, Math, and Problem-Solving. Some of the content and activities are identical to those used in the original "Learn To Learn" class, but most are adapted in some way for hospital employees.

Janelle and Rita's generosity in sharing their learning and experience with me made the development of "Self-Awareness and Learning Power" a very rich experience. While the final product differs from "Learn To Learn" in some ways, the concept of both classes is effective and achieves the desired results.

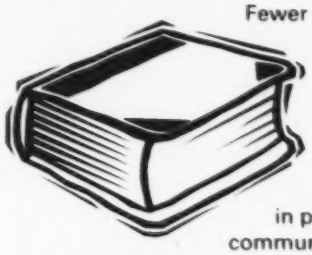
Participants report varying degrees of increased confidence in their basic skills, their communication skills, and their productivity. Almost without exception, they report increased self-esteem.

Transferable curriculum makes sense. With appropriate changes, a class that works well in one company can work well for other companies. The process of sharing curriculum between site models highlights one of the most important workplace basics: Teamwork.

Cindy Graham leads the Pueblo Community College/ St. Mary Corwin, Parkview Hospital Project.

Resources: CLASSROOMS *in the* WORKPLACE

"Classrooms in the Workplace" is a study of workplace literacy classrooms in more than 1,000 small and medium-sized businesses in Michigan. The study's findings include:



Fewer than 5 percent of all small businesses have workplace literacy programs.

The number one reason businesses cite for offering literacy instruction is that they can get a government subsidy to support training costs.

The greatest areas of need for training are in problem-solving, interpersonal communication and math skills.

The greatest skill improvements are found in communication and math skills. The greatest program benefits for employers come in improved output quality.

Copies of the 137-page study "Classrooms in the Workplace" are available for $10 in paperback, plus $3 for shipping, from The Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007-4686. The phone number is 616-343-5541.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Colorado Department of Education announces the Workplace Education Conference 1994. Business and Education: Partnerships for Success

August 26, 1994

Denver, Colorado

$10.00 includes box lunch

For information, call Jennifer Burkhart at 303-866-6936.

WORKFORCE SKILLS

The goal of WORKFORCE SKILLS is to inform and stimulate readers by reviewing current issues and problems in workplace learning. Each issue will contain useful and current information on workplace learning as well as clear and concise "How To" articles.

We welcome feedback and suggestions from our readers. We also encourage you to contribute to our newsletter.

WORKFORCE SKILLS will be sent to any interested professionals. Please call (303) 620-4029 to be put on the mailing list.

WORKFORCE SKILLS is a product of the "Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program", which is a federally funded workplace literacy program. The program is administered by the Office of Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. All opinions and interpretations expressed in WORKFORCE SKILLS are solely those of authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of OVAE or ED.

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The Workplace Education Program and how it has influenced my life.

By Jorge Guerro

Jorge Guerro is a participant in the Morgan Community College/EXCEL Partnership Workplace Education Program.

The Workplace Education Program at Excel Corporation in Fort Morgan has helped me in different ways. It has given me the opportunity to speak better English. Getting involved in this program has given me the chance to meet people from different cultures and education levels.

This program has helped me to learn about cultures that are different from my own. I have enjoyed meeting people from Central-America, the Middle-East, Thailand and North-America in addition to people of my own culture, the Mexican culture. I have learned a lot about their customs and traditions just as they have learned about my customs and traditions. This has also influenced me to learn more about other people's feelings and their customs as well as their traditional ways of life.

Furthermore, this program has shown me how to relate more clearly to my co-workers and to my supervisors. In addition, I have learned to speak correctly and improve myself when it comes to talking to my superiors or doing my work well. Also, I have enjoyed meeting a lot of people from different educational levels. This has taught me that it's never to late to learn and to gain more education.

What I have learned in the last couple of months by meeting and observing people from different educational levels is that now I know how to listen to both sides of any argument. Now, I like to meet people half-way.

I like to take criticism, and I like to be positive. Also, I see other people's points of view. What I have learned I not only practice in my job, but also in my home.

In conclusion, this program has helped me to relate more clearly to my co-workers, supervisors and different people in my community, no matter what religion, race or place of origin they have.

I would like to give thanks to all those people who made this program possible, because without this program I wouldn't be where I am now.

Biographical Note:

Jorge Guerro has been a student in the Workplace Education Program at Excel Corporation for approximately six months. He participated in a 20-week course on Job-Enhancement Skills and was described by his teacher, Mary Gross, as enthusiastic and highly motivated to learn "everything!" He improved by leaps and bounds in her class, especially in terms of his writing and verbal-communication skills. But, more importantly, Mary noticed a tremendous increase in his level of self-confidence.

Currently, Jorge is participating in an Advanced Writing Skills course. His teacher, Aparna Palmer, finds him highly skilled at expressing very descriptive and often complex thoughts in English.

JORGE GUERRO

Advisory Team Member Profile:

JOE MORENO

Workplace Advisory Teams are critical to program success. This article introduces Joe Moreno, a project board member who has contributed greatly to the Fort Morgan partnership.

Joe Moreno serves on the local advisory team for the Workplace Learning Program partnership between Morgan Community College and EXCEL Corporation. The partnership provides instruction in English as a second language, math, communication, and the GED. Joe has worked for EXCEL Corporation of Fort Morgan for seven years, the last four in management.

"As employees learn to speak English and understand training procedures, their own performance improves."

Now a training specialist, Joe supervises training throughout the whole plant, coordinating the work of the 12 trainers on both shifts.

As a trainer, Joe believes that the workplace learning classes at EXCEL help the plant as well as the employees. As employees learn to speak English and understand training procedures, their performance improves. They also gain confidence in their own ability to learn.

As a project board member, Joe has been very supportive of the workplace coordinator, Shirley Penn, and the workplace instructors. He has given them ideas about curriculum and correct workplace terms. He has taken photographs in the plant for use in class and has encouraged employees to sign up for classes.

Joe has 17 years of experience in meat packing plants including Monfort, IBP, and National Beef. Seven years is the longest he has ever worked for the same company, and he plans to stay with EXCEL. Joe says he feels comfortable here - there is opportunity for him to advance at EXCEL.

Joe was born in Texas, but his family moved to Garden City, Kansas where he attended high school. He left high school before graduating but received his GED Certificate through the High School Equivalency (HEP) Program at the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo.

Married, with three children, Joe is a dedicated family man. He loves the outdoors and enjoys camping with his family in the mountains. A certified CPR instructor, Joe has also been a United Way volunteer for several years.

Joe Moreno has great respect for people and is always trying to give others a lift. He is an asset to EXCEL Corporation, to the Workplace Learning Program, and to the community of Fort Morgan.

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HOW TO BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR WORKPLACE EDUCATION

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Get strategies and tools to assess organizational culture, specific methods for building organizational support, and checklists of key questions to answer in every needs analysis.

DAY TWO

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COSTS

Conference Registration*: $125.00
Accommodations: $75.00 plus tax per night single, $85.00 double
*Cost includes two lunches, Monday night reception, conference materials, sample assessments, and workplace curricula

REGISTER EARLY!

To ensure maximum interaction, attendance is limited. Call 303-337-2077 to register for the conference and reserve your accommodations.

Bring your questions and concerns!

The next time you face a tough question related to workplace education, jot it down. Then bring your questions and concerns to the Institute.

CCCOES' Skills for a Competitive Workforce program is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Education

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 303-337-2077

Mike Chabot, left, Excel beef manager, and Morgan Community College President Dr. Richard Bond, right, congratulate one another after receiving the Excellence in Workplace Learning Partnership Award. Jim Raughton, center, Vice President of External Affairs for the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System, presented the award. The Morgan Workplace Education program has served more than 150 participants since August 1993.

The Workplace Learning Project - A Student's View

by Stephanie Joseph
Order Fulfillment Department at Woodmen, Current, Inc.

The Workplace Learning Project is very beneficial. We in the Order Fulfillment Department at Woodmen are very happy that we are participating in the project, and we hope that this project reaches everyone interested.

Participation in the project gave me the incentive to return to college and finish what I started years ago.

The classes also motivate employees to do better at their jobs. Employees are more willing to share their concerns with their employers. Participants experience increased self-esteem, personal growth and the joy of learning.

I can't stress enough how I have benefitted from this learning project.

Stephanie Joseph is a participant in the Current Inc., Pikes Peak Foundation Skills Project.

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The Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program staff has developed workplace learning programs for more than 30 companies. For more information, return this to:

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Newsletter of
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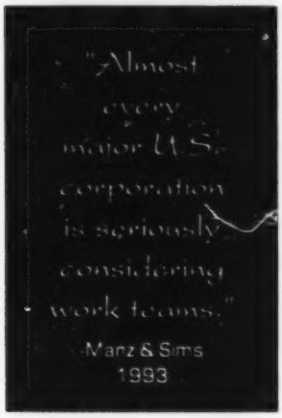
COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Skills for Self-Directed Teams

by Mary Gershwin
CCCOES

Confronted with international competition, turbulent workplace demographics, shortened product cycles, and customer service demands, thousands of manufacturing companies have been turning to self-directed work teams. A 1992 Sloan School of Management survey of 694 typical offices and factories found that more than half the firms surveyed are using self-managing teams to some degree and that forty percent are using them extensively (Osterman, 1994).



Why are so many organizations embracing self-managing teams? Research over the last forty years, beginning with studies in coal mines in England, indicates that employees on self-managing teams tend to be more satisfied, productive, and committed to their organizations (Cohen and Ledford, 1994).

What are self-managing teams?

Although a variety of definitions of exist, the four central defining characteristics of a self-managing team can be seen in the adjacent box.

The day-to-day work life on a self-managed team is vastly different than life in a traditionally managed work group. Generally, self-managing team members participate in groups of 10 to 15 people who take on the responsibilities of their former supervisors. Instead of being told what to do, team members must gather and synthesize information, act on it, and take collective responsibility for their actions.

Some self-managing team tasks include the following: preparing budgets, training members, keeping records, selecting new members, keeping work

Continued on page 2

Coming This Month!

The Institute for Workplace Education

Improve employee performance with customized workplace education in math, reading, writing, communication, and English-as-a-second-language at the Institute for Workplace Education. Day one focuses on how to build organizational support for workplace education, including strategies to anticipate and overcome barriers to successful design and delivery of workplace education. Day two focuses on designing curricula for workplace education and includes sample curricula in reading, writing, communication, math, and ESL. For more information on this learning opportunity, see page 4.

Common Characteristics of Self Managing Teams

- Teams are responsible for completing a specific, relatively whole job task.
- Team members are supposed to be capable of performing any task required to achieve the team's goal.
- Team members have authority to make decisions that have traditionally been made by a supervisor.
- In addition to or in place of individual evaluation, feedback and evaluation considers the performance of the whole group.

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PPCC/Current Award...page 4

Self-directed teams...Continued from page 1

time, orienting new members, controlling quality, planning work, setting goals, controlling inventory, resolving conflicts, assigning jobs, monitoring/correcting performance, solving technical problems, disciplining members, ordering materials/supplies, and controlling absence/tardiness. (Glaser, 1991)

Doing teams well means making sure team members have the basic skills to take on new challenges.

The degree of autonomy varies greatly depending on the team or the organization. In a fully autonomous team the group has the ability to formulate work goals; to govern performance, including where to work, when to work, and on which activities to work; to choose the production method; to decide how to distribute tasks within the group; to determine its membership; to decide whether it will have a leader and what the leader will do; and to decide how the individual work operations will be performed.

Very few self-managed teams are fully autonomous. In practice, teams fall somewhere along a continuum that ranges from a traditional work group to a fully autonomous team (figure 1).

Challenges for team members

In a study of self-directed teams, a senior manager quoted in Hackman (1986) states, "The question for today's managers is not *whether* to design organizations for involvement and self-management, but *how* to do it and how to do it well." One conclusion of the research is that doing teams well means making sure team members have the basic skills to take on new challenges.

Learning to cope with change

Team members must learn to adapt to a constantly changing team environment and develop the skills and attitudes that enable them to cope effectively with change. Changes such as new group membership, changing work demands, and continual needs to learn new skills are constant.

Learning new technical skills

Many self-managing systems have instituted "pay for skill" systems. Workers who can do more jobs within a team are paid for this ability. Rather than moving up to increase their salaries, employees earn pay increases by demonstrating the competence and flexibility to move laterally.

This leads to the need to learn new tasks that often require workers to brush up on basic skills or master new skills to do a job that was always delegated to someone else. For example, in a production plant with a large Spanish-speaking workforce, a handful of employees with good skills in English may have always filled out paperwork for employees with limited command of English. As self-managing team members, all employees should be competent with the paper work.

Learning to accept responsibility for the group's work

As managers give up control, team members need to accept it. In addition to learning all the jobs on the team, members must take on the new responsibility for setting behavioral norms for the group and for accepting responsibility for the group's work.

Lacking adequate practice in taking initiative can be a barrier to team self management. Relatively few team members today have experience in self-direction. Most have worked in environments that value following directions above taking initiative.

Learning to communicate effectively on teams

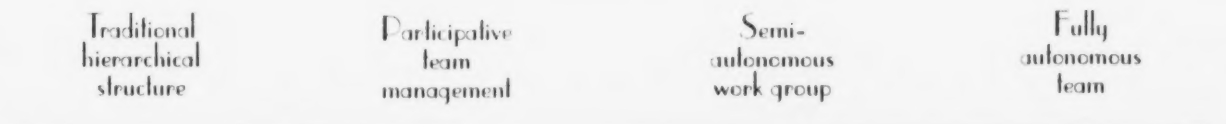
Research on workforce needs indicates that even though team members may have superior technical skills, they often lack the decision making, conflict resolution, hiring and evaluation, meeting management, and feedback skills required on self-managing teams. "Technical operations are a piece of cake, but developing the team will keep you awake at night" (Manz and Newstrom, 1990).

Learning to use data

To support teams in monitoring their performance, most organizations have well defined feedback systems. These feedback systems typically provide data on items such as production, safety, absenteeism, and scrap. Case studies of successful teams and extensive

Continued on page 3

Figure 1



Self-directed teams...Continued from page 2

research both highlight the importance of easily accessible and credible information (Larson and LaFasto, 1989). To use these systems, many members must learn to use data. After all, "You can't chart defect trend levels unless you know some basic math and statistical process control" (Case, p. 72).

Learning to take corrective action

One of the most challenging roles required of self-managing teams members is discipline of team members. (Manz and Sims 1993). In teams with leaders, Larson and LaFasto found that the most severe complaint about team leadership from team members involves "leaders who are unwilling to confront and resolve issues associated with inadequate performance by team members (1989, p. 136). On self-managing teams, the responsibility for dealing with these thorny issues shifts to the members themselves.

Learning to persuade

When team members do not have what they need to perform well, they need to be able to actively seek guidance, help, or resources from the organization. They must do so constructively and assertively.

This demand means that team members need skills in problem identification, persuasive communication, and giving formal and informal presentations.

Learning to teach

Effective team members generally take initiative to help people in other areas improve their performance (Manz and Newstrom, 1990). Team members need coaching and teaching skills to help others learn. More than just being good at jobs, they need to be good at teaching newcomers.

However, most research agrees that the teaching role is secondary to other team member responsibilities. Therefore, team members need skills in setting priorities and saying no if their primary work responsibilities will go unmet by taking on new responsibilities.

In conclusion, to survive, employees in team-based organizations must learn. Likewise, workplace educators working in these dynamic organizations must commit themselves to learning and exploration. Marvin Weibord, a business owner who has experimented with teams for three decades, advises, "There are no textbooks for this, because nobody knows the right amount or how fast is enough. You can't do my experiment. You have to do your own." ■

For More Information

For a case study of self-managing teams, see Case, John. "What the Experts Forgot to Mention" *Inc*., Sept. 1993.

For academic studies of self-managing teams see the following:

Cohen, Susan & Ledford, Gerald. "The Effectiveness of Self-Managing Teams: A Quasi-Experiment." *Human Relations*, vol. 47, No. 1, 1994.

Glaser, Rollin, ed. "Classic Readings in Self-Managing Teamwork." *Organizational Design and Development*, King of Prussia, PA, 1992.

Hackman, J. Richard. "The Psychology of Self-Management in Organizations." *Classic Readings on Self-Managing Teamwork*. Ed. Glaser. 1992.

Manz, Charles & Sims, Henry. *Business Without Bosses*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993.

Manz, Charles & Newstrom, John. "Self-Managing Teams in a Paper Mill: Success Factors, Problems and Lessons Learned." *Classic Readings on Self-Managing Teamwork*. Ed. Glaser. 1992. pp. 280-304.

For background on effective teamwork in a cross-section of business, sports, and political settings, see Larson, Carl & LaFasto, Frank. *Teamwork: What Must Go Right/What Can Go Wrong*. Sage, Newbury Park, 1989.

Workforce Skills

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We welcome feedback and suggestions from our readers. We also encourage you to contribute to our newsletter.

WORKFORCE SKILLS will be sent to any interested professionals. Please call (303) 620-4029 to be put on the mailing list.

WORKFORCE SKILLS is a product of the "Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program," which is a federally funded workplace literacy program. The program is administered by the Office of Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. All opinions expressed in WORKFORCE SKILLS are solely those of authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of OVAE or ED.

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Pikes Peak Community College and Current Receive Partnership Award

Corporate, Workforce, & Economic Development (CWED), a division of Pikes Peak Community College, and Current, Inc., received *The Exemplary Partnership in Workplace Education Award* from the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System at a special award ceremony held August 16 at Current. The award recognizes excellence in workplace education partnerships.

Current and PPCC have worked together since May of 1993 providing on-site customized education for 332 Current employees. Advisory teams guided the process to ensure that learning met employee needs and to develop a structure of support for learning. Curriculum was designed for employees at all three Current sites.

Jay Fox, chair of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, presented the award on behalf of the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. Fox noted that community colleges have a long track record in offering customized training and expressed the Board's hope that all involved in the workplace project continue with life-long education. ■

Jay Fox (center), chair of the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, presented a workplace education award to Dr. Marijane Paulsen (left), president of PPCC, and to John Medved (right), president of Current.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Workplace Institute to Aid Employers, Educators

Business professionals from small companies to Fortune 500 corporations and educators working with business can learn to improve employee performance with customized workplace education in math, reading, writing, communication, and English-as-a-second language at the Institute for Workplace Education to be held at the Embassy Suites, Colorado Springs, Oct 24 and 25.

Sponsored by the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System, Morgan Community College, Pikes Peak Community College, and Pueblo Community College, the two-day institute will focus on strategies and tools to assess organizational culture, specific methods for building organizational support, checklists of key questions to answer in every needs analysis, and tested curricula for workplace education.

The Workplace Education Institute staff has developed workplace learning programs for more than 50 small and large companies and authored numerous articles and curricula for national audiences.

Dr. Jerome F. Wartgow, System President, will keynote the conference, discussing how remarkable achievements in workplace learning can transform an organization, develop powerful human resource potentials, and spark economic growth. For further information or to register for the conference, call (303) 759-5860. Attendance is limited--so call now! ■

Resources

Available on Internet

The TRDEV-L discussion group provides a forum for professional trainers to seek/share information. In order to subscribe, send an e-mail message to one of these internet address:

"LISTSERV@PSUVM.BITNET"
"LISTSERV@PSUVM.PSU.EDU"

with the following message:

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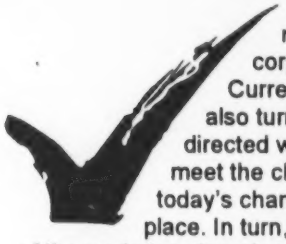
Communication Skills for Teams

by Lisa E. Travis
Pikes Peak Community College



Like many major U.S. corporations, Current, Inc. has also turned to self-directed work teams to meet the challenges of today's changing workplace. In turn, the curricula of the workplace learning classes at Current reflect this by teaching a variety of skills employees need to be successful on a self-directed work team. Employees can learn skills such as communicating effectively with other team members and taking initiative in a multitude of different ways—here are a few possibilities from the communication class at Current.

In communicating effectively with other team members, it is important to learn how to manage and resolve conflicts with others in a productive way.

Beginning a class with a conflict simulation/exercise can provide a great basis for learning by allowing participants to see how they react in a conflict. The Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument, a self assessment that indicates a preferred style of conflict resolution, can also be used to discuss the styles of conflict resolution and their usefulness in different situations.

One of the most common problems in resolving conflicts is being unable to look at the conflict from the other person's perspective. Try having students describe a conflict from the other person's point of view—its amazing how difficult they find it!

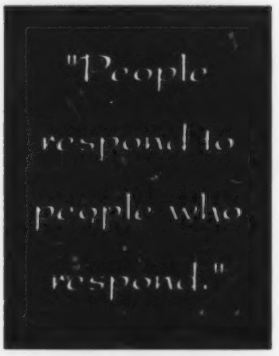
In addition, it has been said that "people respond to people who respond." In that light, teams that learn how to communicate more effectively by giving both positive and constructive feedback to each other can enhance productivity and morale.

In communication class, participants discuss guidelines for giving positive and constructive feedback and spend time practicing the skills in class through role-playing exercises.

Observers can also add to the in-class practice by providing valuable feedback to the person who is practicing while at the same time becoming more skilled in giving feedback themselves.

This leads to another skill that is critically important to the self-directed team's success: learning to take initiative and take responsibility for the group's work.

One technique that not only helps transfer learning to the workplace, but also encourages taking initiative and responsibility, is the use of ACTION cards. Give each participant an index card and ask each one to jot down something specific he or she will work on next week. Participants then bring the card back to work to practice their new skill while at the same time taking initiative. For example, in communication, participants give positive feedback to a teammate one week and try to resolve a conflict the next week. At the next class, discuss their triumphs as a review!



More importantly, and underlying all workplace learning classes at Current, is helping participants build self-esteem. This, in and of itself, can lead to increased participation on the team, as well as ownership of team ideas and results. As self-esteem increases in any of the basic skill areas, employees often build the confidence they need to take initiative to help improve team relations and productivity. In addition, increased self-esteem can facilitate learning the many other skills necessary to be a successful self-directed team member. ■

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The Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program staff has developed workplace learning programs for more than 50 companies. For more information, return this to:

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Newsletter of
THE SKILLS FOR A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE PROGRAM

COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

WORKPLACE LEARNING EVALUATION: Using Interviews, Observations and Surveys to Measure Impact

How can we know if training is having its desired impact?

The "Skills for a Competitive Workforce" program is completing the first phase of evaluation by asking questions on four different levels. While typical quantitative measures of improvement such as standarized tests are used, program leaders can also obtain some of the richest data from interviews, observations and simple surveys.

WORKPLACE LEARNING EVALUATION

LEVEL ONE	
Student Reaction	How much did participants/company like the training?
LEVEL TWO	
Student Learning	How much did the participants learn?
LEVEL THREE	
Student Performance	How much are they using what they learned?
LEVEL FOUR	
Organizational Results	What is the impact of training on the organization?

LEVEL ONE: Do the participants like the training?

This level consists of "smile sheets" or course evaluations which ask participants questions such as "would you recommend the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

RAFAEL VASQUEZ: A Workplace Education Success

written by Betty Johnson, *Morgan Community College*

Rafael Vasquez, a strip-boner at Excel Corporation, was chosen to participate in the new Workplace Education classes provided through a federal grant award to the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. Excel and Morgan Community College make up one of three partnerships in the state benefitting from the "Skills for a Competitive Workforce: A Colorado Workplace Initiative" grant.

RAFAEL VASQUEZ

Mary Gross, instructor for his class, reports that Rafael spoke better English than he thought he did, but lacked confidence in his vocabulary and writing. He didn't speak up in class when he started in August, and he was prepared to remain as a strip-boner as long as he worked at Excel.

After three and a half months in Workplace Education Training, the change in Rafael has been dramatic. His foreman, Gabriel Aguirre, speaks very highly of Rafael and notes a marked improvement in Rafael's English since he has been going to class. Ms. Gross noted, "Rafael has become more assertive and has even said he can see himself applying for a higher level job at Excel."

The Workplace Education Training has made a profound change in Rafael Vasquez's life; the training has also benefitted his company and community at the same time. He has been given the opportunity to become more productive and to see possibilities for his life and that of his family that he did not even envision before the training. ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Company Advisory Boards/Teams: The Issues they face as workplace partners. ***page 3***

The Mind-Workout: Cooling Your Class Down with Interactive Techniques ***page 2***

Basic Skills: A Hidden Problem? ***page 4***

Resources: Applied Communication ***page 4***

Project Seeks Model Workplace Education Programs at Small Businesses ***page 6***

THE MIND-WORKOUT: Cooling Your Class Down with Interactive Techniques

written by **Mary Crabbe Gershwin,**
Colorado Community College & Occupational Education System

"COOL DOWN TECHNIQUES PROVIDE CLOSURE, SUMMARY AND APPLICATION OF CLASS PRINCIPLES."

For years instructors have used "warm-up" techniques to help participants make the transition into learning. Yet frequently, class sessions end in a flurry when the time is up. Cool down techniques provide closure, summary and application of class principles.

Here are two simple cool-down techniques designed to promote retention of material, foster interaction in workplace training and provide instructors feedback on what students are really learning. For more information, see *Classroom Assessment Techniques* by Thomas Angelo and K.Patricia Cross.

MUDDIEST POINT/CLEAREST POINT

Step One:

In the last 10 minutes of class, distribute blank note cards and ask participants to take three to five minutes to summarize the "clearest point" of the class on one side of the card, and the "muddiest point" of the class on the other side. Make sure they label which is which.

Step Two:

Instruct participants to explain the clearest point to a partner. For many students this step is critical. In explaining what they have written, they solidify learning and develop skill in explaining concepts and ideas. Moreover, participants often gain greater clarity from hearing a peer describe a point.

Participants also spend this time to state the muddiest points. Sometimes partners will be able to clarify muddy points or help to formulate a clearer question.

Step Three:

The whole class reconvenes, and small groups report orally on their clearest and muddiest points. Instructors can take up the "muddy points" at the beginning of the next session.

MARY CRABBE GERSHWIN
co-directs The Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System's "Skills for a Competitive Workforce Program

ONE MINUTE WRITE/PAIR/SHARE

Similar to the "clearest point, muddiest point," this technique requires participants to consider what they have learned and to summarize its significance. Instructors can simply ask students to write a one-minute paper summarizing the most significant point they got from the class, or instructors can choose a more directive question. For example, in a workplace literacy course on effective communication, participants can be asked to identify the one communication behavior they will use for the next two days and how they will use it.

Step One:

Students write a "one-minute paper" or do a "one-minute write" in response to a question prepared by the instructor.

Step Two:

Students orally share their papers with a group of two to three students.

"THE TECHNIQUES PROVIDE A LIFE-LINE FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE QUESTIONS, BUT ARE RELUCTANT TO SPEAK UP IN A LARGE GROUP."

Step Three:

The class reconvenes as a large group, and selected small groups report orally on their "one minute papers." At the end of class, the instructor usually collects these papers, but tells participants not to put their names on the papers. The purpose is to get a general idea of what the class finds valuable and what they are learning. This is not a "test." Rather, students use this activity to reflect and provide feedback.

BENEFITS

- These techniques are quick and simple and can easily be used at the spur of the moment.
- The techniques provide a life-line for students who have questions, but are reluctant to speak up in a large group.
- The "write" portion of the exercises promotes students writing in every class session, and practicing writing in small amounts of times.
- Instructors get quick feedback on what students find difficult to learn. As a result, instructors can return to clarify difficult concepts rather than moving on when participants are in the fog. ■

COMPANY ADVISORY BOARDS/TEAMS: The issues they face as workplace partners

written by **Rita Moore,**
Pikes Peak Community College

Workplace/educational partnerships are notorious for not having plans and policies in place prior to receiving a funding award. The reason is simple. People in high level managerial positions must devote their time to real, immediate concerns. Workplace educational projects are real and tangible only upon funding.

Advisory boards are often faced with the need to meet frequently during the first few months of the project to address questions. If these issues can be addressed prior to project start-up, the programs are more likely to run smoothly.

ISSUES FOR ADVISORY BOARDS

- **Compensation for in-class time assessment**
- **Recording off-shift compensated time**
- **Confidentiality of student progress**
- **Confidentiality of who enrolls in a class**
- **Handling attendance**
- **Scheduling around high production times**
- **Scheduling around mandatory overtime**
- **Limits on how many classes may be taken**
- **Logistics of space/location**
- **Who is eligible for classes**
- **Reporting learning needs not within the scope of the grant**
- **Scheduling assessment sessions**
- **In-kind contributions from department budgets.**

It is likely most business and education partnerships will face some or all of these issues. An advisory board assigned definite roles and responsibilities can expand the circle resources and leap policy and procedural hurdles that are present when education and business work together.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES: One Advisory Board's Statement

Below is a statement that one advisory board adopted describing their function. This group of company representatives is available to the workplace learning partnership to create policy to guide the project.

- Represent all interest levels in the program
- Provide company insight
- Direct educational effort to point of greatest need
- Ensure that all interested employees are familiar with the training
- Assume the responsibility for facilitating the program for the company
- Guide the process of obtaining, analyzing and acting on participant feedback
- Facilitate the assessment process and the evaluation of curriculum
- Encourage all participants to derive maximum benefit and success from the program
- Make the program self-modifying to achieve the above
- Evaluate the program after the end of the grant time frame. ■

Rita Moore leads the Current Pikes Peak Community College Workplace Learning Project

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BASIC SKILLS COMPETENCIES: A Hidden Problem?

written by **Shirley Penn,**
Morgan Community College

SHIRLEY PENN *leads the Excel/ Morgan Community College Workplace Learning Project.*

Detecting basic skills problems in the workplace is sometimes difficult because employees have developed ways to compensate for or hide inadequacies. Observations may assist in answering the question of basic skill needs. Below are some simple observations that might be useful in approaching the question of basic skills needed:

- Does the employee often take work home or away from the work area, when it is not necessary to do so?
- Are there more errors when instructions are written instead of given orally?
- Do employees at times forget or confuse oral instructions?
- Do employees quit when offered a job promotion or do they turn down opportunities for job advancement?
- When given written materials, do they spend an appropriate amount of time going over the material?
- Does the employee wait for someone else to begin a task before he or she begins?
- Does the employee have problems implementing new procedures or using new equipment?
- Does the employee resist changes in the workplace?
- Do reports often need to be redone because of errors?
- Are the same words and phrases repeated over and over in report after report?
- Does the employee have vision problems that go uncorrected or are glasses often left somewhere else?

An effective, adequately-trained workforce is often the most important factor in a company's success. Accurate assessment of basic skills, abilities and training needs can be a vital process in the stability and success of a company competing in today's workplace. ■

RESOURCES: *Applied Communications*

"THE SERIES IS ESPECIALLY HELPFUL FOR EXPERIENCED COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTORS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR NEW MATERIALS, OR WHO WANT TO USE VIDEOTAPES."

DESCRIPTION

Applied Communication is a comprehensive set of learning materials designed to help students develop and refine communication skills. The series focuses on strengthening skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, problem-solving and non-verbal communication. The applied lessons, useful for any occupational area, are supplemented by lessons specifically targeted to the fields of agriculture, business, health occupations, early childhood education and technical/trade/industrial.

SCOPE OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION

The series consists of 15 instructional modules, each with an Instructor's Guide, Student Worktext, and two 10-minute videotapes. The modules can stand alone or can be presented as part of an integrated course.

REVIEW OF THE SERIES

Applied Communication is very well organized with lesson plans, a list of additional resources and a chart of student competencies covered in the lesson. The series is especially helpful for experienced communication instructors who are looking for new materials, or who want to use videotapes. However, even though it is marketed as a complete package, instructors should supplement material in Applied Communication to make it more effective. New teachers or instructors with a minimal background in teaching oral or written communication may find the series frustrating.

LEVEL OF MATERIAL

Applied Communication is geared primarily to secondary students or younger

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

program to others?" Participants can also be asked to identify priorities in training with questions such as "What is the most important thing you learned in this class?"

LEVEL TWO: What are participants learning?

Sometimes the evaluation indicates participants love the training, but does not clearly identify learning gains. The second level of evaluation examines how much students have learned and what they have learned. In some courses, this evaluation is based on customized pre and post assessments. Videotapes, writing samples and simulations can be used in other courses as documentation of learning gains.

LEVEL THREE: Are participants using what they have learned in the workplace?

Participants may show gains in level two. However, the question for companies who fund the training is often, "Are they using the new skills?" Program leaders can evaluate the use of skills through the following methods:

1. **Observation:** For programs with significant budgets for evaluation, observation of participants in the work setting can provide the most meaningful feedback. For example, if training focuses on strengthing communication skills in team meetings, evaluators can observe team meetings and watch for specific behaviors before and after training.

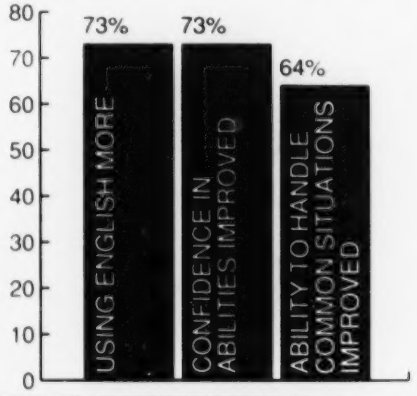
2. **Document Review:** Leaders of programs which focus on writing can measure training effectiveness by reviewing documents prepared by the students. For example, in one program, performance appraisals written by class participants showed greater clarity, more detail and improved spelling.

3. **Participant Reports:** Asking participants to report specifically on improvements in skills is an often overlooked method and source of data. In a recent workplace class, participants were asked to identify what changes they plan to make as a result of the training. Follow-up interviews were done with participants to see if they had made the changes.

4. **Peer/supervisor report:** The Morgan Community College Program recently surveyed supervisors of participants from a 20-week English as a Second Language class. Findings from this survey are shown below.

IMPACT OF WORKPLACE LEARNING ON EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVENESS

Responses from Supervisors of Employees in Excel/Morgan Community College Program



LEVEL FOUR: How much does the learning improvement matter to the organization?

Level Four addresses program evaluation on the organizational level. Participants may demonstrate achievements in learning. They may also be using the new skills at work. The final question is, "How much does all of this matter?" It's a difficult question to answer well. Qualitative data can provide important insight into evaluation. The following story captured the impact of workplace learning:

A manufacturing facility wanted key leaders in its predominantly Hmong workforce to improve their communication skills so they could move into supervisory positions. At the end of the program, several Hmong employees had been promoted. According to managers, the advancement yielded unexpected benefits. As bilingual team leaders, the newly-promoted Hmong employees were able to provide cultural and linguistic support that was not available before the training. Additionally, the interviews revealed that the organizational climate improved for non-native speakers who reported increased loyalty to the company as a result of training. ■

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SKILLS FOR A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE PROGRAM

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Project Seeks Model Workplace Education Programs at Small Businesses

"PROGRAMS SHOULD OPERATE IN BUSINESSES OF LESS THAN 250 EMPLOYEES AND HAVE BOTH BASIC SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS COMPONENTS."

Northern Illinois University has received a grant from US Department of Education to strengthen linkage between workplace literacy and vocational skill training in small business. The project has completed a literature search and is currently looking for model workplace programs to visit. Programs should operate in businesses of less than 250 employees and have both basic skills and vocational skills components.

The project will facilitate focus groups across the country and will provide workshops this summer on how to conduct progressive workplace literacy and vocational training for small businesses. The project will also produce materials to assist employers and workplace educators. If you know of possible programs or are interested in the workshops, please contact Mary Gershwin at (303) 620-4029. ■

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working adults. Workplace programs may need to adapt the materials for use with older students.

QUALITY OF MATERIAL

Finally, the quality of the course modules varies significantly. The module on following and giving directions is very strong. Other modules, such as the one on problem solving, are weak. Instructors should preview at least three of the modules before making a decision about the package. ■

For information in Colorado, contact Donlyn A. A. Whissen, information specialist at the Colorado Vocational Education Resource Center, ((303) 988-6160 x311), to obtain the material where it is available on a cost recovery basis. Outside Colorado, call AIT (1-800-457-4509) for information on Applied Communication.

WORKFORCE SKILLS

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